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Interview with Mr. Sydney Moses Abbott, Curator, Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company
Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Marcus, February 2001

RM: Today is tenth June, 1988, we are in the armory of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, above historic Fanueil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts. We are speaking with the curator of the Armory, Mr. Abbott, and I'm sorry that this machine was malfunctioning before. Thank you Sir, Mr. Sidney M. Abbott, Curator. And Mr. Abbott, I'm sorry I'm going to have to ask you to repeat some of the marvelous things you've told us before, but first of all, once again I would like to ask you, and I know this is redundant, but could you please tell us a bit about yourself. I hate to ask you again about your age, and your military service, but once again, please, could you tell us?

SA: Well, I am 93 years old. I served in World War1 with the 26th Division, 101st Engineers. Oversees in the American Expeditionary Forces. I was there three years when Hartford (?) went home while I was hospitalized. And so I didn't get back till 20, they went home in 1919.

RM: Now I know I asked this before, but again, once again, could you please tell us how one becomes a Captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company?

SA: Well, you have to run for an office. We have the privilege, although we're part of the militia, of the Commonwealth, we have the privilege of electing our own officers, who usually are publically commissioned Captain and two Lieutenants on the Boston Common on the first Monday in June by the Governor of the Commonwealth if he's available. If not he sends someone.

RM: Lieutenant Governor?

SA: He sends the Lieutenant Governor or somebody in high ranking constitutional offices.

RM: Now, Commander Queen, Captain Queen, was Captain in what years? Virginia, do you remember?

SA: 1932 I think it said on the plaque up there.

VM: Yes, 1932.

SA: I'm not sure of that year, I'd have to go up and look at it.

VM: I'm quite sure it was 1932.

SA: On the bottom of it is a date. It gives his name and a date.

VM: I'm quite sure it's 1932.

RM: Now I believe you told us that the Captain has to, does he not preside at all meetings of the company?

SA: He has to, yes.

RM: And how many meetings a year are there approximately?

SA: 20 odd, 20, could be 22 or 23 meetings. They're all held in the Armory, here.

RM: And aside from all of that, and presiding at the meetings, are there other duties that a Captain has to perform as well?

SA: Yes, he has to get the company together if they call him from the City Hall on Independence day and want him and the company to take the members up over the City Hall and give them a exhibit parade or something like that, decorate the grave where our first captain is buried up here, in King's Chapel Burial Ground. He comes under the Governor and the Mayor.

RM: I noticed on television, I remember seeing on the Bicentennial Day, July 4, 1976, a group of the Ancients at the King's Chapel Burial Ground and also at the Granary Burial Ground.

SA: Yes, we have members in both places.

RM: Now is that done frequently, or was that only for the Bicentennial?

SA: Annually. Usually around June, the Captain will take some members of the Company over

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who he is

there and pay their respects to ~~(? Probably the last name of the first captain~~), and they go over to the Granary Burial Ground where I am quite sure some members of this Company are buried.

RM: How long have they been doing this? In Captain Queen's day did they do this?

SA: Oh yes. Long before his day.

RM: I was very impressed...

SA: A couple hundred years before his day.

RM: I called Virginia to the television and said look...

SA: When he was C ~~c~~aptain, they used to march to Copley Square to the church and then back to the Common for the Drumhead Election.

RM: Oh wow.

SA: When he was Captain. Now, we have the church service at the Cathedral of Saint Paul's on Tremont Street, and then to the Common, which saves that long march from Copley Square and back.

VM: Excuse me if I interrupt. Where on Tremont Street is Saint Paul's Cathedral? My grandmother's family are a fairly old Boston family, and her grandfather was one of the founding members of Saint Paul's. Is it diagonally across from the Granary?

SA: It was built in 1820, the Cathedral of Saint Paul, and it's right directly opposite the Park Street subway station.

VM: Oh all right.

SA: There's Winter Street, and then half a block down, there's the Cathedral of Saint Paul. Opposite the Common.

VM: It faces Tremont Street, doesn't it?

SA: It faces Tremont Street. Big columns.

VM: I must have walked right past it. We wanted to see it. See they originally went to Trinity, and then there was a band of dissidents that broke up and founded Saint Paul's.

SA: I remember hearing that.

VM: Well they went to the framed building in Summer Street, and then the one burned in the Great Fire.

SA: (Sorting through papers...) I was trying to give you a copy of the service at the Cathedral of Saint Paul.

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VM: We'll go down and see it.

SA: What?

VM: We're going to go down and see it. I think I must have walked right past it last time I was here.

SA: Well he had his church service at the Copley Square at the Old South Church.

RM: Captain Queen?

SA: Yes.

RM: Why did he choose that church? Because it was the Old South?

SA: It was the Old South, I don't know, it was chosen long before his time. Many years. Then they used to go the Common and march up to Copley Square and then back to the Common and finish the election and passing review if the Governor happened to be there.

RM: Now you met Captain Queen when you entered the Company here, did you not?

SA: No I know him before. I knew him back in the 30's when we put him through the Shrine in the Mechanic's Building when we made him, initiated him as a Shriner. I was on the Uniform Units ~~News(?)~~ of the Aleppo~~(?)~~ T temple, I still am. I'm a emeritus~~(?)~~, I've been on 60 years. In the

Uniform ~~News(?)~~ Units of the Aleppo(~~?~~). He was initiated in the Shrine in the 30's I don't know the exact year. We were meeting then in the Mechanic's Building.

RM: Now I am not a mason, so please tell me, and for the benefit of anyone in our family afterwards, about the Shrine, and also the basic, I know it's a secret order, but were you a member of the same masonic lodge, or just of the Shrine?

SA: No, just the Shrine. When you go into masonry, as I did in 1920 when I got out of the service, you have to be invited by a member, of the masonic ~~the~~ lodge. Then you take your degrees, and then after that you're eligible to go up the ladder to the upper bodies the York and Scottish ~~Right~~ Rite. I'm sure that Captain Queen went the York ~~Right~~ Rite. Either way you can get into the Shrine.

RM: I know he was a mason and very active. He was in the Shrine together with you then?

SA: Yes, I've been in the Shrine for 60 years, so I helped to initiate him. I'm still a member of the Degree Staff of the Aleppo Temple. We initiate. We pick a few certain men out of the group that's going in the Shrine that year. They're examined by the doctor and then we look, not all the members that go in the Shrine when Queen went in or anyone else would. They pick a few that are healthy and examined by a doctor and then they would.

RM: Do you remember what degree Captain Queen was in his lodge?

SA: Well, there's many degrees in masonry.

RM: Yes I know.

SA: When a Blue Lodge Mason, the first three degrees in Blue Lodge, then you become a master mason. Then after that, you have the privilege of going up. You have to be either a York ~~Right~~ Rite Mason or a Scottish ~~Right~~ Rite Mason to get into the Shrine. So you either have gone in the York ~~Right,~~ Rite, which is the chapter, counsel and commandery, or the Scottish ~~Right,~~ Rite, there's four bodies, ~~volumes(?), and~~ you go through those. Either one, you can go into the Shrine. You don't have to take both. I'm a member of both.

RM: But it's by invitation?

SA: No.

RM: To be a Shriner it is, isn't it?

SA: To be a Shriner, you can be asked by some friends after you take the first three degrees.

RM: But you cannot, say you were a mason and you wished to be a Shriner, you cannot apply yourself.

SA: Oh yes.

RM: Oh really?

SA: If you don't have a friend who can put you in just write to the temple. We have a temple now, a mosque up in Wilmington. I was up there last night at a dinner of the Uniformed Units. Last night I was up there. We all served when the circus was up there, as ushers and one thing or another.

RM: Oh yes, and of course the Shriners are very famous for their work for various charities and children's hospitals.

SA: Children's hospitals. We have one right over in the West End on Boston Street where I was born. The Burns Institute. And we have another orthopedic in Springfield. There's twenty of them in the United States and Canada and Mexico. Twenty Shriner hospitals.

RM: It's beautiful work. Did you go on any of the field trips or excursions with Captain Queen?

SA: No, I wasn't a member then.

RM: I'm sorry. Because Virginia has a picture of him at Arlington at the Tomb of the Unknown

Soldier, and I was wondering if you were on that...

VM: No, he's not at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

RM: Yes. There is a picture of him if you take a look in the book, the Annual Report.

VM: Oh all right. That book, OK.

RM: There he is, representing them.

VM: All right, because we also found, my aunt showed us, my aunt is grandpa's only child who is still alive, and she has Alzheimer's Disease and she barely knew where I was going when I told her I was going to Boston for the weekend. One day when I said my daughter had been at Fanueil Hall, I said "do you know whose picture is there?" She said "oh yes, my father's." And the next day she barely knew where I was going. But anyway, she had a picture of my grandfather standing by a gravestone of another man also named Walter Queen, Walter W. Queen. And we looked him up in W~~w~~hose W~~w~~ho in America, and found that he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, and that's the picture I was confusing it with, Ronny. But we don't know who this man is, he just happens to have the same name, but he isn't related. OK, I'm sorry, I don't remember the picture of the Unknown Soldier's Tomb.

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RM: This all came about, and the reason for our interest is that Virginia has always been very interested in her family and her grandfather, he did quite a bit, in typical grandparent fashion to indulge in the grandchild. And unfortunately, she never had a chance to see him through the eyes of an adult, he became ill, you were how old, about twelve or thirteen?

VM: I was about twelve when the first signs of memory loss occurred with my grandfather.

RM: So she never had a chance to know him through the eyes of an adult. And Walter Queen had two daughters and one son. The son's name was Frederick and he was lost in the submarine service in the Second World War.

SA: I didn't know any of his family. I knew Walter quite well.

RM: So in 1976, we decided to come here, because Walter's daughter, Evelyn, my mother-in-law, always said "Now sometime you must go to Fanueil Hall and see father's picture there and you will see him, because he was a commander."

SA: Let me see if his name is in here. This is a book on the Royal Order of Jesters, so he probably joined somewhere in the 30's because he took his degrees in the 30's.

RM: So we came here in 1976 and it was very amusing in a sense, and I'm sorry I keep telling

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this Virginia...

SA: The Bicentennial?

VM: Yes, we were here well after the Fourth of July, it was late September.

RM: September, And our children were just tiny toddlers then.

VM: Sarah couldn't even walk, she was creeping all around the floor here.

SA: Walter Queen's name there, he was a Jester in the date up here.

VM: Let me write that down.

RM: 1938 Walter K. Queen, the Royal Order of Jesters, Boston, Court Number 103 Roster.

SA: He had to be invited then to go into the Jesters. I've been a Jester for 45 years.

RM: I see.

SA: So we worked him, and then a short while afterwards someone would propose him, probably who was a Jester invited him to come in to the Jesters. We only take in thirteen a year. It's very exclusive and selective.

VM: Royal Order of Jesters, I never heard any mention of that.

SA: Well, you'd have to be a Shriner to be a Jester. And you have to be invited.

VM: I see. We're beginning to go through family papers, my grandfather's letters and things like that.

SA: He probably was invited by some member of the C~~c~~ompany whose picture is up there because there's a dozen past Potentates ~~photo(?) take~~s up there of the Aleppo Temple.

VM: I haven't seen a thing in his papers about the Jesters. I knew about the Shriner's from his obituary, but I never knew about the Jesters.

SA: Well it's a selective group, as I say they only take in thirteen a year, and the year that you saw on that, that's the year he was taken in. And we have thirteen candidates at once~~(?)~~.

RM: Well we came here in 1976 seeking the picture. And I told Virginia, I said "why don't you tell them that your grandfather was ~~a~~ commander?" And she said "no, I don't want any attention, I know my grandfather, I'll find his picture." And we're walking up the steps and I said, "you really should tell them that you're here." "No, I just want to go as a tourist, I don't want any attention, please." "Alright." And we came in here, and we had no idea that the pictures of all the past captains known were hanging. So we're looking around, and I don't know whether it was you or Mr. Whittamore, one of you...

SA: Whittamore probably was up there. He was the Executive Secretary then.

VM: You were both here that day...

RM: One of you came up and said "May I help you?", and you said "yes, I'm looking for my grandfather, he was captain here," and he oh, he said... No, she said "I'm looking for Captain Queen's picture," "oh Walter, he's over there." "Oh did you know my grandfather?" "Oh you're his granddaughter?" And I believe he brought you over and you introduced yourselves, and she's smiling and beaming, and I whispered to her I said "I thought you didn't want any attention?" And she said "oh this is nice, this is just like a visit with grandpa."

VM: See, he was the only grandfather I ever had. My Grandfather Adams died before I was born, and so I only remember one grandfather, and we were all, three of us kids, so fond of him. He was a wonderful grandfather.

RM: But it gave her the first opportunity through the eyes of an adult to understand his work here in Boston. And when we left, I said "oh, I wish we had brought a tape recorder," and that was twelve years ago, so we're back.

SA: I was here twelve years ago.

RM: Yes we remember you.

VM: Well we didn't..

Note: you asked
? name of his
employer.? / Yes

SA: I have been here 27 years ago. I had to retire from Armour ~~(? name of his employer)~~ as branch manager in Boston, ~~a Rhode Island~~ Armour and Company. I had to retire at 65. Major Arson, whom I served with in World War One was the curator, and he got pneumonia, he got very ill just as I retired, and they wanted a member to take the position. I got it, and I've been on it ever since.

RM: Did you serve with Captain Queen in any other organizations, such as American Legion...

SA: I'm in the American Legion 62 years.

RM: He was a member also.

SA: You see, whatever unit you're in, they have their own post, so he served probably with some unit. I'm a charter member of the Yankee Division Post. That's the outfit I served in oversees. But I'm eligible to join any post that I want. But I happen, they were chartering in 28, and became a charter member of the Y.D. Post.

RM: He lived in Needham...

SA: Yes I know that.

RM: And undoubtably he belonged to, perhaps a post in Needham, I don't know.

SA: Possibly.

RM: We're trying to gather material about him.

SA: A veteran can pick his post, he can join any post he wants to. Whether they're Navy, or... They're all posts mixed up most of them, as a general rule. The YD Post now took in members of the Yankee Division from World War Two. ~~I~~ It keeps the post alive. How many of us guys are there?

RM: I know, I know. I remember MacArthur's famous statement about old soldiers~~?~~.

SA: They never die, they just fade away.

RM: They fade away, but that's good that you're getting younger blood into to keep it going.

SA: You have to. Well the outfit I served with was the old First Corp. Cadets. I served with them in World War One when Edwards formed the division in 1917, there were a lot of young men that were members of the First Corp. Cadets that were Tech (? MIT?) and Harvard men. And he saw the (?) of the engineer regiment. Edwards (?) did in the ~~formal~~ forming division in the 2200 men were members of the First Corp. Cadets. We were made the 101st engineers who signed to

a term for MIT? Check this out.

the 26th Division as such. We were combat engineers, carrying a Springfield rifle.

RM: After a person serves as captain here, can they serve in other positions of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company?

SA: Oh yes, sure. And they can serve as many now are serving, in the Finance Committee, and the Common Fund Committee. They can serve in many (going through papers)... Let's see if I got... Which could show you the different committees. And they usually do. They, many of them don't want to let go. They served as captain, but they want to still be on the roster, and then they want to become on the Finance Committee. ? Fund, Museum and Library Committee...

RM: Just because they've reached the top position, I suppose, there's no reason to be...

SA: They don't want to let go. I'm against that, they've had it, and why not step down, we have a lot of company, men in the company, that can fill those positions. One called me this morning, a past captain who ran for office on the Finance Committee, and he was defeated by a friend of mine. I was glad because we have many of the 850 members, many capable men that can serve on those committees.

RM: Is that the roster now, 850?

SA: Yes. There's PC (Past Captain) Robert Murphy, he was past captain, and he's on the Finance Committee. And that's the Museum and Library, they don't run for that, there's not enough... Now here's Anzoni, he's been on committees for 35 years after he was captain, he a senior living past commander, and he's still serving on committees. And here's Jim Lynch, major general retired, he still wants to be on committees. But there's two or three other now, Freeman, on this is the Permanent Fund Committee, and you'll see PC's all over the book that want to be on committees. We have 850 members, and many of them are qualified for those positions, and why doesn't the captain who has had everything let go. I don't know whether Queen served on any committees or not, I couldn't tell you.

RM: That was my next question.

SA: I couldn't tell you.

RM: He was always apparently very proud of his position that he held, I know that when I first met Virginia and after talking with her mother awhile, one of the first things I remember seeing was the annual report of the company in the house. She always kept her copy right out.

VM: In the livingroom of the house on Summit Road?

RM: Yes.

SA: In 1946 Gloucester here, I'm seeing if Queen was on any of the committees then. He was on a committee in 1946.

RM: Oh really, on which committee was that?

VM: Let me take a look.

SA: The name there, see it, Walter Queen somewheres there?

RM: Oh yes, on the Finance Committee.

SA: Finance Committee, that's it.

RM: There it is, 45 Alferton Road.

VM: 47 Alferton Road.

SA: Past captains don't want to let go. That's a five year, the Finance Committee, is five years. So he served on that.Undoubtably one of these, Clarence MacKenzie is past ? of Aleppo, Paul Curtis and Duncan. Undoubtably one of these fellows proposed him in the shrine because they were all Jesters, all of these guys. This company, many years ago, were run by Shriners. It's different today. But there was Queen, you mentioned if he served on a committee, and I had this,

this is a manual roster that we put out every year. This one is 88 here, and we'll have a new one come out 88-89. See the captain serves six months in each year.

RM: Oh, your year starts when, in June? From June to June?

SA: June, the June election. Let's see, I have some later ones here, see, he's not on any of them. That happened to be an old one that I had, 46. So he's been on everything in the Ancients.

RM: Do you remember just what he was like personality-wise?

SA: Only that he was a big pleasant man. Everybody liked him. When we put him through his degrees in the Shrine, I just knew him as Walter Queen. And as a member here, he was still a member, but I think he was then living in Connecticut when I came in.

RM: Yes, he moved in what year Virginia?

VM: In August of 1947.

SA: I was probably over here then.

VM: And then within two years, his memory started to get fuzzy. My father said that it was even beginning when he lived here in Massachusetts.

SA: I knew he had a problem through the Shrine and the Jesters, I knew he had that problem.

VM: Well it must have been Alzheimer's.

RM: The loss of his son in the war was horrible.

VM: And see my uncle was missing in action for about two years. Well, he was actually killed in October of '43, and we received word that he was missing in action. It was in December, the 4th it was.

RM: Submarine service.

VM: And then, until the war was over, and he was legally declared dead, we never knew if he was dead or alive, or if he'd turn up a prisoner of war.

SA: But you knew he was with Byrd at the South Pole.

RM: Oh yes.

VM: Oh yes. I've known about that since I was knee-high to a grasshopper.

RM: Oh yes, and I'm looking at this picture here, and it says Lieutenant Commander Walter K. Queen and the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company flag in Little America.

SA: I didn't put that picture there, I think Major Austin, who probably knew Walter a little better than I, got that picture and placed it here.

RM: Well I remember seeing this here twelve years ago, and I'm sure you're happy to see it still.

SA: Come on up and see headquarters room. (Climbing stairs)

RM: Yes Sir. Yes, and you must have your lunch soon.

SA: I usually go down at twelve, so that Colonel Hall can... (Riffling through papers) Have you got one of these?

RM: I would like one for each of my children please.

SA: Take all you want. I want to find out the date and see if I can get an annual record book up in the annual...book room, I was to see the date on Queen.

RM: Oh we have them Sir.

SA: Do you have one of those (?) books?

RM: We have several, and we are pleased that we have one for each of our children so they can know about their great grandfather.

SA: His year he was captain?

RM: His year, his year he was captain.

SA: Alright, because we have a yearbook room, and I probably could find another one for you.

Come on up stairs.

RM: Oh, thank you. You know, we didn't have time to see... Now this is the Stairway of the Constitution, is it not?

SA: That's right. And this is the order they accepted. The constitution was drawn up and signed... Come ahead Mrs...

RM: Were you going to call her Queen? That's alright.

VM: No, Mrs. Marcus.

SA: The constitution was drawn up and signed in the Old Statehouse in Philadelphia, now Independence Hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed. This is just the order they accepted and flags of the different states. What year was Commander Queen, Captain Queen Captain, do you know of the year?

RM: '31-'32.

VM: '32, I think it says on that picture.

SA: I'll take a look in the yearbook room and see if I can find one of these books.

VM: Alright.

RM: Thank you.

SA: Look around. That's the captain's quarters, and his picture. This captain was our captain last year. We go from '87 -'88. Next Monday we have a meeting for the new captain and the members of the Museum and Library Committee will change. This will go down and hang on the wall there, and the new captain will go up there for a year. There's the Governor over there, he's head of (?).

RM: Thank you.

SA: I'll see if I can find one. '31-'32?

RM: Yes, I believe so.

SA: Is that (?) (tape is distorted)

VM: Yes. We have several red leather bound volumes at home. See, we couldn't a lot for my mother's house..... (faded out of range)

SA: And you can have this too to go with your collection.

RM: Virginia? Thank you sir, for the children. For our children.

VM: Thank you. Thank you.

SA: I have more of them there if you want some.

RM: May we have one more. We have two children. We noticed before, we noticed sir, that we saw him at the ceremony in that picture at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

SA: Yes.

RM: Thank you. That's lovely. May we have one more for our children?

SA: Yes. We have a yearbook room. Come here, I'll let you look at it.

RM: Well, thank you. I'm Librarian of our Historical Society in Stamford, Connecticut, so anything like this of course always intrigues me.

SA: Now you go in there and find a book like I just found (laughing).

RM: Oh my goodness.

SA: I'll go get you another one. I know just where they are. Every thing has tags on them and are arranged.

RM: I give you credit Sir, for a man...

SA: I usually come up with ... (tape distorted)

VM: Oh, well, thank you so much. See Walter's family is quite small.

SA: There's pictures all of these like that.

VM: Walter's family has gotten quite small, because only one of his children married, and unfortunately, there was no one to carry on the name of Queen except that it's my middle name. And I'm afraid it's just a very small family at the moment.

RM: Well there are two descendants, our children.

VM: Yes I know.

RM: And I am so sorry that you were not on duty when our daughter came here with her school group.

SA: I happened to be out there in Brookline getting a CAT Scan. I hadn't had a check up in ten years. I haven't had been having any problems or anything, but I thought I'd go and get checked up. So one doctor checked me up. I spent nine hours in Beth Israel Hospital. One doctor checked me up and then they said well, we're working on a CAT Scan, this is nothing, just something that I hurt on the inside of my mouth there.

RM: Well thank you.

VM: Thank you very much.

SA: So that's the reason I was not here last...(mumbled)

VM: Well Elizabeth said she came up here by herself. And I think everyone else was in the Quincy Market.

SA: I would have been...(mumbled)

VM: See we remembered your names. We wrote a letter to my mother who was living in Vermont at the time.

SA: I would have been happy to have taken her around.

VM: And we put your names in the letter, so we just hunted up a copy of the letter.

RM: Do you get many descendants of captains coming here?

SA: Oh yes. Quite a few of them come in. Oh, my grandfather's picture is over there... We moved a lot of them in this corner down here. We show them where there relative... whatever.

RM: Do you get descendants from all over the nation?

SA: We have right of descent members in every state of the union. By right of descent, meaning that they have an ancestor who was a member here from 1638 to 1738. And you're eligible to join the Company by right of descent. Otherwise, the membership is made up of New Englanders. But right of descent can live anywheres

RM: Oh really?

SA: We have about 175 of them. We took in 25 this year.

RM: Could it be by right of descent through female lines, or only direct male?

SA: There isn't... The female line is national, they're in every state in the union. There's a woman in Washington, Major General Louck's(?) wife, they're both right of descent. She on the female side, he on the male side.

RM: Most interesting. May we tour your museum? You have quite a few things...

SA: Go on along, I'm going to get downstairs in a couple of minutes and get a cup of coffee.

RM: Can we take you to lunch or buy you anything?

SA: No, no, I brought a sandwich with me, thank you very much.

RM: I would buy you a lobster even Sir, you've made my wife so happy. As she said, it's just like a visit with her grandfather.

SA: We had in my Blue Lodge, a week ago, we meet the first Thursday, we have usually in the June meeting. They have a lobster festival on the June meeting, which I never order. I order steak because I don't to tear my hand apart pulling a lobster.

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VM: That's what turns me off about lobster. It tastes so good, but I don't like all that mess all over my hands, and then having to get cleaned up.

SA: This is the (?) punch bowl. That's the one on exhibit at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. That's a rare piece. We used to, years ago, the company, I think in Walter's time, would drink punch out of it. They put a 30,000 dollar value at the Museum of Fine Arts, so the company, the different committees, put it in a half inch glass. (Pointing to a picture?) Here's the company in London in 1912. This fellow was Potentate(?) when I went into the shrine in '28. 68th... (Next picture?) This fellow is wearing a medal of honor. He's a past Potentate(?) of Aleppo(?). Most of those fellows are Shriners there. (Opening a door?) This is where the meeting room, this room in here. Membership Committee holds meetings here. This is their domain. And the Membership Committee will meet here on meeting night to interview new members who have been invited and this is there room here. And we have a lot of old histories in there. We even have, if you'll remember the witchcraft delusion, Sam Sewall ~~Seul,~~ he was Captain here in 17 ought 1. We have his diary here.

RM: Of Judge Sewall, ~~Seul~~?

VM: The original?

SA: Judge Seul, Samuel.

RM: Judge Seul. He was a member of the Ancients?

SA: He was captain in 17 ought 1.

VM: Oh, that was after the delusions.

RM: Yes, but he was still the same man.

SA: He's the only one that was in 1686 or something...

RM: '92

VM: '92 I believe.

SA: That the delusion went on. He's the only one that go up in the Old South Meeting House while his Confession of Contrition was read, and said "I'm sorry, they were not witches."

RM: It takes a big man to admit he was wrong.

VM: He was in very grave (mumbled)...

SA: He wished he went to the grave thinking they hung witches. (Pointing out a picture?) There's one of our clerks, who rode with Revere. Dawes.

VM: Oh yes.

RM: Oh, he's the one who completed the ride, did he not.

SA: He was the only... His horse, he jumped the fence and got away and completed....

RM: Wasn't that a joke that because Revere had a poet named Longfellow, poor Dawes never got the statue?

SA: His name was phonetic, and that's why Longfellow was able.... (pointing out ?) Read the name on these shells, I used those in World War One.

RM: Sidney M. Abbot, Engineer.

SA: (Mumbled?) ...this week, March 1918 on there. There's the first front... (mumbled?) Why don't you say hello to our Executive Secretary.

RM: Virginia, you go ahead of me.

SA: (Man's name?), this is Walter Queen's granddaughter.

ES (Executive Secretary): Walter Queen?

SA: Walter Queen, whose picture is over in the corner by the right trap.

ES: Oh yes. Nice meeting you.

VM: And this is my husband Ronald Marcus.

RM: I'm her husband, Ron Marcus.

ES: Nice to meet you.

RM: Mr. Abbot was telling us about Captain Queen.

SA: I knew him quite well.

ES: If anybody that would know, he would know. This fellow's an encyclopedia of happenings in the Ancients.

SA: He was a member here up until '46 or '47, then he went down to Connecticut. And I guess he had a little problem, health problem, and finally died around that time, didn't he?

RM: Yes.

VM: He apparently had Alzheimer's, although they weren't calling it Alzheimer's then.

SA: His picture is over in the corner with the white cap. He's the only one with the Navy uniform. The only other one with an army uniform is Hudson.

ES: Gene Hudson, yes.

RM: We're doing this, and tape recording this for our children, so they may know of their great grandfather.

SA: I have some of his books, I have a gross of his books up there. The only ones in cases like this.

ES: They're kept in pretty good shape. Some of the others we can't even find.

SA: There's a picture of Walter there. A big guy, about six foot four.

VM: We have some of his at home, a small, leather bound dark red volume. It's a year book I think. Is it a bound edition of this book or something?

RM: It was your mother's. It's a bound edition of this, which was your mother's. But our children now can have this.

SA: Every captain has the bound copies.

VM: Well we have several of them, and we removed them from my mother's house after her death.

RM: But the children can have these now, which we appreciate very much, because they should know about their great grandfather. And we noticed the flag that he took down to the Antarctic, which is still here.

SA: It's on my desk. There's a picture on my desk.

RM: And the flag is hanging over there.

SA: The flag is right there. We should never have had it cleaned, because when he clean those flags he did a job, the colors didn't come out.

ES: Well he's in the cleaning business. I told one of the members in the Museum and Library. You take it to a (distorted tape)...

VM: We were planning to go to Hartford this weekend anyway, and I had taken time off from work, so we just changed and came here instead.

RM: Because we wanted to make up for what we didn't do twelve years ago, and come with a tape recorder because you remember her grandfather.

SA: Well I'm glad I was able to give you a little information that you were looking for.

RM: Thank you. Anything about him. It sounded as though he really was quite a mover in Boston and in Needham.

SA: He was a joiner. He joined, like myself, many organizations and he was an active joiner. Like his (?) activities in this company.

✓

VM: He was a very active person, into so many things, and always on the go.

SA: Some people just join and that's it. They just join and carry a card.

RM: And you don't see hide nor hare of them then.

SA: That's it. At meetings. In a masonic meeting. Probably in the Blue Lodge, there would be 180 members to the Blue Lodge, and you'd get 25 or 30 you having a big (mumbled...)

RM: I think it's the same I think with masons, with elks, with historical societies, with most fraternal organizations and companies that you have a membership who supports you, and then you have a small core of workers.

SA: Oh yes.

RM: And I take it that Captain Queen was a worker than.

SA: Senator Saltenstall's ancestor was captain here. And this picture up here, right over there, is a fellow who hung witches.

RM: ~~Seul?~~ Sewall?

SA: ~~Seul.~~ Sewall.

VM: Samuel ~~Seul~~ Sewall. Now wait a minute, which one was ~~Seul~~ Sewall?

SA: See the one of those two (mumbled)...

RM: ~~Seul~~ Sewall didn't wear a wig, he hated wigs.

VM: We've seen pictures of ~~Seul~~ Sewall...

SA: He's one of those, ~~Seul~~ Sewall is one of those here. 17 aught 1. We had to move those up, they were on the top floor. (Mumbled)

RM: He hated wigs, so it must be one of the... There he is. There's ~~Seul~~ Sewall.

VM: Oh that's the well known picture of him. Alright, I was looking for that little cap on his head.

SA: That's ~~Seul~~ Sewall there.

RM: You see, he hated wigs. He wouldn't wear a wig. He hated them. He thought they were vanity.

SA: He married the mint master's daughter, who made the fist silver pine tree shillings here. And he was giving her weight in several pine tree shillings. I understand she was quite a buxom lass. As a dowery.

RM: So he got quite a dowery.

SA: He did alright for himself.

RM: Her weight in shillings.

SA: There's four of our captains over here that served as general officers under Washington. One of them received the sword of Cornwallis of Yorktown. Benjamin Lincoln.

RM: Benjamin Lincoln was a member?

SA: Yes. He was captain here in '88. There's his picture there.

VM: I see you have a picture of the surrender at Yorktown there. I was looking at it...

SA: There's Washington saying farewell to his generals. They're over my desk (mumbled).

VM: I wanted to take a look at it.

RM: Was Knox a member of the Ancients? General Knox?

SA: No Knox was not a member.

RM: But Lincoln I see was.

SA: Benjamin Lincoln, and that there is Brooks, General Brooks. I've got his sword in the case inside. And this here is Heath, General Heath, constant companion of Washington.

RM: Oh, he wrote his ~~memories~~ memoirs too.

SA: I've got all those in a book down there on the generals of the Revolutionary War. There's four presidents of the United States who have been members here. Over in that picture, you'll see the four faces, James Monroe, Chester Allen Arthur, Calvin Coolidge, and the late President Kennedy. He was televised live coming down those steps, Seventh of November, 1960.

(Tape ends)

SA: ...and the first three settlements, Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. Not necessarily in that order. And this fellow, right up over here in the circle, lived in one of those towns I mentioned in Connecticut. He was one of the four founders. Here's Keene, our first captain, Duckman, Sedgewick, and Spencer. Spencer lived in one of those little towns in Connecticut.

(Mumbled)

RM: Well we mustn't keep you from your lunch. We're intrigued though about one thing. There's a piece of ordinance over there under Captain Queen's portrait.

VM: Oh yes.

RM: It was originally an ordinance from the surrender at Yorktown it says.

SA: Yes, the caption states that. When the South Armory on Irvington (?) Street in the Back Bay was torn down. That was one of the pieces that were in the South Armory that we got and exhibited here. They tore down a lot of armories. The East Armory and the South Armory, they tore them down.

RM: Was that brought here within your lifetime?

SA: This piece? Yes, the armory was torn down about around 25-30 years ago.

RM: And who was responsible for getting it here?

SA: General Ferrera was then our Executive Secretary, and he had worked out of that armory, and he was able to get that piece.

RM: A fine piece to have.

SA: Well good luck, take care.

RM: Thank you sir.

VM: Thank you Mr. Abbott.

RM: Thank you Mr. Abbott.

VM: Good bye.

(Tape ends)

SA: Up over the big hall, a balcony go around it , which they used in meeting nights for the

Shrine and whoever was using, they can and still do. We had a stunt that we used on Captain Queen, I think Senator Saltenstall was the same night. We put him on a camel. But Captain Queen, being a big fellow, we had a stunt. We hoist up to the balcony and would hook on there, and then the candidate would slide down the stunt through a folding brick wall. So we took Captain Queen up there, put him in a little boats man's chair on this wooden stunt protected (?), and we put goggles on him and everything. And when he came down, he went through a phoney brick wall that had a sack of (?). When he went through the stunt and came out onto the floor in the little boats man's chair, and he howled, he looked like Al Jolson singing Mammy or something. He was a good fellow, he took it, he was a good fellow. We went downstairs and showered him off.

RM: He must have been a very good sport.

VM: He had a great sense of humor. He could be a stern disciplinarian. My mother said he was a very strict father, and kept the kids in line and no one dared to question him.

SA: He went into the Jesters before I did. I've been in 45 years, he went in the 30's. As I pointed out, I went in '43 in the Jesters. So I didn't know him in the Jesters, but I knew him later on.

But he was, seeing him up here, one thing or another. He was in the royal order of jesters which I showed to you. And on a committee here, the Finance Committee.

RM: Well thank you again. We appreciate it very much.

SA: I bring a little sandwich with me everyday. We have a kitchen one floor below where ... Oh good, thank you John.... (John hands him something) where I go down and I have some instant coffee, make a cup of coffee. This is my pay. You're paid once a month. I work for the Ancient and Honorable Artillery, not the city. I'm employed by the Ancients.

RM: Well you have a lot of responsibility because I just noticed a huge group of children through here, and golly...

SA: I'll see of we have a thing here to put those books in.

RM: Oh that's alright.

SA: I wiped them off, you can place them in here.

RM: Yes, I will.

SA: I wiped them off for you, so you won't get much dust on them. They're all clean inside of the carton.

VM: Now that is this flag isn't it?

SA: That's this flag here.

VM: The one that flew over the South Pole.

SA: It flew over Little America.

RM: Little America.

VM: And then there's a replica...

SA: And then we had a smaller one, a flag, all red, that Admiral Byrd carried in his pocket.

VM: That's it.

SA: A small one, about that size, and it this, our coat of arms and our motto (Latin) Deeds not Words. On it, the scroll.

VM: Because I remembered. See, what we did, when we wrote to my mother and told her about our visit with you in '76, we made a xerox copy of the letter. So when my daughter said she was going on this school trip up here, I said let me look up that letter and get the names of the men at the armory. I said I know one was a Mr. Abbott, but I don't remember the other name.

SA: Well, if it was in '76, Colonel Whittamore would have been the Executive Secretary. He's still around, but he isn't too well.

VM: Yes, I looked it up in the letter.

RM: Do you see him?

SA: I saw him last Monday night at the banquet.

RM: When you see him again, would you please tell him that Walter Queen's granddaughter was here.

SA: I'll do that, yes.

RM: And tell him that we have fond...

SA: He'll probably be here Monday at the meeting. We have a meeting Monday. Then this new captain is going to Bavaria and Berlin to set up his fall tour of duty. When Queen was Captain, we used to go up to Canada. That was the Company, I wasn't a member then.

VM: He was from Canada, he was born there.

SA: Well, they're going to Bavaria for the Oktoberfest, and then they're going to spend a week in Berlin. They're going over, they're leaving Tuesday after the meeting here to go over and set up the trip for about 150 members that will be going. (To a tourist?) Yes sir, may I help you?

T (Tourist): No, I was just listening, if you don't mind?

SA: No, that's quite alright.

T: Thank you.

RM: We mustn't monopolize you. You've given us so much of your time.

SA: That's quite alright.

RM: I thank you.

VM: We've enjoyed it so much. And my mother appreciated the pictures so much. She was so fond of her father.

RM: And my children will appreciate their heritage some day, we hope. We thank you very much. Virginia, we must not take this gentleman's time.

SA: I'm show you the trip they're going on... (Shows a map) They're leaving here, here's where they're going. That's the trip they're going on. It's called the fall tour of duty. Usually, in Captain Queen's time, they'd go up to Canada, some city there, or take a trip on the Saganay River or something like that. That's where the company will be going in October.

RM: Quite a trip, quite a trip.

SA: Now did you drive from Connecticut up?

RM: Yes.

VM: Yes. And it was on the spur of the ...

SA: (Mumbled) When I used to go down in the ‘30's. I used to go down to New York to get on a boat, the Santa Rosa and those kind of boats. One of them. I took my first drink in the ‘30's. I was over sixteen I think at the time. I was on one of those ships, off the real one that was on Chief Engineer’s table. And they said Abbott, tonight, you have to have a drink. So I says what’s the occasion? It’s Perkins’ birthday, and we ran the general retire in the Santiago of Chile (?).

T: Could you please help me out, when you get a chance?

SA: I’ll be here.

SA: And there was a young couple at the table from Centrialia Virginia. And the first drink I had was gin and champagne. Now if I drink, if I have a drink now, it’s scotch. I had one last night at the party. I don’t drink. I don’t smoke either.

RM: Well, you look very hardy Sir.

VM: You do.

SA: I feel alright.

RM: Good.

SA: Unfortunately, I'm a bachelor, I never married. That's why I joined all these organizations that I'm a member of. Every winter month, I have nine or ten masonic meetings with different masonic organizations that I'm a member of. So it keeps me busy.

RM: Well we know a lovely lady in Stamford, Connecticut who chose not to be married. Miss Sara Mead Webb. And Miss Webb belonged to how many organizations, twelve, at least?

VM: Oh, she was into so many.

RM: Colonial Dames and DAR. This, that, and everything else. And she studied for the law, but she never took her bar exam. And she was always parliamentarian. And she said that she found quite a bit of fulfillment in that, and she did quite a bit of help in the hospitals, and in other works too.

SA: Some people get more goodies that way. I decided in the beef business I was in that I had to be up at five in the morning, and I decided that I wouldn't be very good company in the evenings. So I decided not to take it upon myself to get a wife. Which is the sane way to live. The bible says you take upon yourself a wife, and (mumbled).

RM: Well, you're giving of yourself to organizations like this, and we thank you.

VM: You've done so much for others.

SA: Well, good luck, enjoy your stay in Boston.

VM: Well, we're only going to be here today and tomorrow, and then driving back Sunday.

SA: Are you staying in a hotel around here?

VM: No, Framingham, at the Howard Johnson's.

RM: We're staying in Framingham. Do you know if the Episcopal Diocesan Archives are open?

SA: They're on Joy Street, right?

RM: Right.

SA: That's across the Common from Saint Paul's Cathedral. And they're on Joy Street. It don't know if they're open.

RM: Alright, we'll just telephone... We must get to Saint Paul's, and we must have something to eat. We must go now Virginia.

VM: See, my grandmother's family came to Boston in 1784, and my grandfather's family was much later. And they were, well, fairly early members of Trinity, but they don't go back to the beginning.

SA: I don't know too much about religion or anything. I go to church Sundays, and I am a member of Trinity. I'm not what you'd call a... I been a member a great number of years. I know I was conceived in San Francisco, and my mother and father left there late in January 1896. And just landed in Boston. I was just born the seventh February. But the four children were born there, all of them went back to live in California. So my mother took the four of them to Trinity Church and got a baptismal record because their birth certificates were destroyed in the fire ten years later in 1906 in the San Francisco earthquake.

RM: Oh sure, everything was wiped out.

SA: And the records, they all were all destroyed so my mother took them to Trinity and had a baptismal record, which was accepted in California for people who were native born.

RM: On yes, because everything was flattened in the earthquake.

VM: When you said fire, I thought of the Great Fire of 1872, but I realized...

SA: Well the earthquake caused the big fire, and everything was destroyed. Then it was 1906, ten years after they left there.

VM: Oh I see.

RM: Let's go Gin.

VM: OK, I'm sorry we have to go, it's been a lovely visit.

SA: Where are you eating anyplace in particular?

VM: Somewhere in the Quincy Market.

RM: We're going down to somewhere in Quincy Market.

SA: There's places over there, Union Oyster House is down here, a (pointing to a kid) Captain a year from now is there. Do you want to ride down in the elevator so I can show it to you?

RM: I never knew there was one here.

VM: OK, we thought there wasn't one.

SA: It will save you 52 steps, coming up or going down.

VM: No, we weren't aware that there was an elevator in here.

SA: Well, it's only used for incapacitated people. Downstairs, somebody comes in whose incapacitated and he wants to come top side, why the Park Service will put them on the elevator and bring them up. (Mumbled - Do you know whose) on this chart here?

VM: Yes.

SA: Man of the year.

RM: Man of the year. Robert Keene Memorial Man of the Year.

VM: Oh, you've given so much to the Ancients.

(Elevator starts)

SA: It's right here. (Mumbled) (To VM) You've been nursing that bottle for quite a long time.

VM: Oh the reason is I had some bacon with breakfast and I got very thirsty.

SA: I have it Saturdays only.

(elevator stops)

SA: Now you see, this saves you 52 steps. I use it going down because I have more trouble walking down than stairs than I do going up.

RM: That's the exception to the rule.

SA: Now this is the superintendent's office there, and here is.... See these andirons here? The British left ... that's supposed to be a Hessian soldier, the mercenaries that the British hired to fight for them here. They left that here during the Revolutionary War.

RM: Oh, when they evacuated?

SA: Yes, when they evacuated, Sunday, March 17, 1776, they evacuated Boston. It's now called Saint Patrick's Day.

SA: Good luck.

RM: Good luck and good bye.

VM: Goodbye Mr. Abbot, it's been a very nice.

(Tape ends)